

Sons of Zebedee Evangelical Lutheran Church
422 Salt Street
Saltsburg
Indiana County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5435

HABS
PA,
32 SALT,
19

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SONS OF ZEBEDEE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

HABS No. PA-5435

Location: 422 Salt St., Saltsburg, Conemaugh Township, Indiana County, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner: Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Present Use: Church.

Significance: The Sons of Zebedee church represents a modest example of vernacular Carpenter Gothic styling, including such features as a center steeple with bell tower, pointed-arch stained-glass windows, and an exposed-beam interior.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1878 (cited in church history).
2. Original and subsequent owners: The church was built for and has remained in the hands of the congregation.
3. Original plans and construction: No original plans or drawings have been located; however it appears that the original one-story, gable-front brick form has been retained despite the radical modification of the steeple.
4. Alterations and additions: After 1927, a brick, gable-roofed building was erected on the rear of the lot, perpendicular to the church block; basement rooms and a corridor link the two structures. The tower exterior has been altered by the removal of a slender spire and pinnacles, and clapboard siding has replaced more decorative cladding (old views).

B. Historical Context: The Lutheran religion, though not common in Saltsburg, was historically widespread throughout western Pennsylvania. In the 1790s a large influx of Lutheran families moved west to Westmoreland County (which at that time included Indiana County) from the eastern counties of Lancaster,

Berks, and Franklin (Arms and White, 223-24). The Evangelical Lutheran sect was founded in 1846 in the United States by a Norwegian immigrant, Elling Eielsen. This sect diverged from the mainstream Lutheran church in its belief that a prospective member of the church must prove his conversion before he could join. As a consequence, the group was slow to grow, and remains very small today (Encyclopedia of American Religions, 104).

For additional context, twenty-one reports on other buildings in Saltsburg may be consulted, as well as overview histories of the town of Saltsburg (HABS No. PA-5438) and of canal town development in Pennsylvania (HABS No. PA-5666). See also, Sara Amy Leach, ed., Two Historic Pennsylvania Canal Towns: Alexandria and Saltsburg (Washington, DC: Historica American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, March 1989).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A late-nineteenth-century example of vernacular Victorian church design, specifically the textural-but-simple Carpenter Gothic, as seen its three-bay by five-bay center-steeple plan, pointed-arch windows and patterned slate roof.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: One-story, about 35' x 55' (Sanborns).
2. Foundation: Stone.
3. Walls: Brick laid in five-course common bond with concrete or masonry coping atop symbolic brick buttresses; frame on upper bell tower.
4. Structural system: Load-bearing brick.
5. Chimneys: Two brick slope chimneys on the south side of gable, at the east and west ends.
6. Openings:

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- a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance on the east facade is through the tower base, which serves as a vestibule. Double wood doors with squared and pointed-arch panels echo lancet-window patterns; these and a similarly paneled "transom" are set deep within a paneled wood surround that continues up to form a pointed arch, the upper portion of which features a stone surround.

An off-center rear/west door features a narrow, single, wood-paneled door topped by a transom, all fit into a pointed-arch framework.

- b. Windows: On the primary block, the north and south facades feature four bays of tall, pointed-arch windows with stained glass, the bottom panel of which serves as an awning opening. These feature brick surrounds, while those on the front facade have stone surrounds. Similar openings are found flanking the tower on the east facade. Each window contains stained glass, and was sponsored by church members, although evidently commissioned as a set. Smaller versions of these windows are found at the second and third levels of the north and south elevations of the tower. A quatrefoil-shaped stained-glass window within a circular stone surround appears above the front door, and above the altar on the rear/west elevation.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape: Steeply pitched gable-front with central tower; covered with slate shingles in a diamond pattern.
- b. Eaves: Narrow, but slightly deeper-than-average eaves supported by wooden brackets.
- c. Tower: Brick structure with frame roof section; two steeply pitched cross gables pierce a pyramidal roof that has been amputated above to form a polygonal terminus. The sides are clapboard with louvered openings. (This replaces an earlier tower with pinnacles and finials at the corners.)

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The undivided rectangular plan is entered through an exterior tower vestibule. The west end of the room contains the altar, which is set upon a slightly raised and central projecting platform, surrounded by a balustrade. At the east end of the room is a projecting choir loft and perhaps an organ; this is partially screened from view by a wood balustrade. Ten rows of pews divided by a central aisle fill the interim area.
2. Stairways: A wood stairway in the southeast corner connects the first floor with the choir loft.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are plastered white, in contrast to the dark, wood of the interior gambrel-like space of the roof. The overall surface of the ceiling is composed of narrow, east-west-running board; five exposed rafters feature ornately carved bracings at the wall and ceiling joints.
4. Lighting fixtures: Two rows of glass-shaded light fixtures are suspended from the ceiling; these do not appear to be original.

D. Site:

1. General setting: The Sons of Zebedee Church faces east from a Main Street site; to the rear/west is the second Saltsburg train station, and to the north and south are additional residential and commercial structures.
2. Outbuildings: The building erected behind the church has a raised stone foundation with brick structure; three bays wide by five bays long; topped by a slate roof with single, north-gable-end chimney; and pointed-arch windows and at least one door that echo the design of the church; date, builder, and purpose unknown.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Old Views and maps:

The collection of the Saltsburg Branch, Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County, Stone House Museum, contains numerous historic images.

Beers, F.W. Atlas of Indiana County. New York: F.W. Beers and Co., 1871.

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"Saltsburg, Pa." New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co. Ltd., February 1886; New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Ltd., October 1891, January 1897, July 1903; New York: Sanborn Map Company, April 1909, February 1927.

B. Primary and unpublished sources:

Indiana County, Pennsylvania, deed books and tax records.

C. Secondary and published sources:

Arms, C.T., and White, E. 1745-1880, History of Indiana County, Pennsylvania. Newark, Ohio: J. A. Caldwell, 1880.

Berringer, Gloria, ed. Canal Days Sesquicentennial: 1838-1988. No publisher, 1988.

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Johnson, George. Saltsburg and the Pennsylvania Canal. Historic Saltsburg, 1984.

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory, "Western Division of the Pennsylvania Canal: Indiana and Westmoreland Counties." 1979/82.

Stewart, J.T. Indiana County, Pennsylvania: Her People, Past and Present. Chicago: F.W. Beers and Co., 1913.

Wallner, Peter A. "Politics and Public Works: A Study of the Pennsylvania

Canal System, 1825-1857." Ph.D diss., Pennsylvania State University, June 1973.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was conducted by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record in cooperation with the America's Industrial Heritage Project under the directorship of Randy Cooley; AIHP is an undertaking of the National Park Service, based in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania. Recorded under the direction of Robert J. Kapsch, chief of HABS/HAER, the project was completed during summer 1988 at the HABS field office in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Project leader was Alison K. Hoagland, senior HABS historian; field supervisor was Dorothy Burlingame, University of Vermont; project historian, Kristin Belz, University of Virginia. Large-format photography is by David Ames. Editing of the final report was done by Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.

This report was completed as part of a larger project documenting two canal towns--Saltsburg, on the Western Division of the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal, and Alexandria, on the Juniata Division--flanking the Allegheny Divide. Twenty-one reports on other buildings in Saltsburg, an overview history of Saltsburg (HABS No. PA-5438), and of canal town development in Pennsylvania (HABS No. PA-5666) are part of the HABS/HAER collection. Twenty-two reports on buildings in Alexandria (Huntingdon County) and an overview history of Alexandria (HABS No. PA-5407) are also available. Results of the project were published as Two Historic Pennsylvania Canal Towns: Alexandria and Saltsburg, Sara Amy Leach, editor (Washington, DC: Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, March 1989).